

July/August 2006

A DECADE OF WELFARE REFORM: FACTS AND FIGURES

The Urban Institute, July 26, 2006

<http://www.urban.org/publications/900980.html>

The passage of welfare reform law in August 1996 signaled the end of "welfare as we know it." The legislation transformed Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) into the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, dramatically changing the nation's approach to supporting needy families with children. Reform was intended to end dependence on government cash assistance by promoting job preparation and work. Benefits now carry a time limit and most recipients must meet work activity requirements. The 1996 law gave states new flexibility to implement their welfare programs, while creating incentives to encourage work and the formation of two-parent families and penalties to reduce out-of-wedlock childbearing. It also changed numerous other safety net programs, such as child care and child support. During the period just before and just after welfare reform, other federal programs that affect the work and earnings of low-income families were enacted or modified as well, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), food stamps, and Medicaid.

BUILDING A BETTER NEW ORLEANS: A REVIEW OF AND PLAN FOR PROGRESS ONE YEAR AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

The Brookings Institution, August 2006

http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20060822_Katrina.pdf

One year since the onslaught of Hurricane Katrina, recovery in New Orleans continues to be uneven. Many ascribe the little visible progress in the region to the slow pace of federal spending and decisionmaking. However, quality of spending matters. This paper reviews the federal, state, and local post-hurricane recovery effort, highlights areas of progress, and offers a plan for ensuring that future actions create a more inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous New Orleans region.

DOES IMMIGRATION HURT U.S. WORKERS?

Pew Research Center, August 24, 2006

<http://pewresearch.org/obdeck/?ObDeckID=54>

In the United States, the population of foreign-born workers aged 16 and older increased by more than 60% between 1990 and 2000 -- from 17.5 million to 28 million. In several states, the foreign-born population more than doubled. In a recent report the Pew Hispanic Center examined whether there was a relationship between this migration and the employment outcomes for U.S.-born workers.

FACTS FOR FEATURES, SPECIAL EDITION: 300 MILLION.

United States Census Bureau. August 9, 2006.

<http://www.census.gov/Press->

[Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/007276.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/007276.html)

This year the total population of the United States will reach 300 million.

This selected collection of facts illustrates the differences between that milestone and earlier ones - when the population reached 100 million in 1915, and then 200 million in 1967. Examples of such contrasts include the following:

* Life Expectancy: 2006 -- 77.8 years; 1967 -- 70.5 years; 1915 -- 54.5 years.

* Percentage of the population, age 25 and older, who had at least a high school diploma: 2006 -- 85.2 percent; 1967 -- 51.1 percent; 1915 -- 13.5 percent.

HANDBOOK OF INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM

U.S. International Information Programs, July 2006

<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/journalism/journalism.pdf>

The French political writer Alexis de Tocqueville noted when he visited the United States almost 200 years ago. "You can't have real newspapers without democracy, and you can't have democracy without newspapers," he wrote. Since then, that simple statement has been proven true in nations all over the world. Democracies, established or emerging, depend on the consent of an informed citizenry, and the news media are a primary source of the information people need in order to govern themselves.

IMPROVING VOTER PARTICIPATION

The Century Foundation, June 2006

<http://www.tcf.org/Publications/electionreform/wangsoa6-29-06.pdf>

Although U.S. voter turnout went up in the highly contested 2004 presidential election—to around 55 percent of age-eligible voters - American voting rates are still far below those of most other nations. Internationally, U.S. voter participation ranks 139th out of 172 countries. To encourage more Americans to vote, major reforms are needed to remove barriers to casting ballots.

INCOME, POVERTY AND HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE IN THE UNITED STATES 2005

U.S. Bureau of the Census, August 2006

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/p60-231.pdf>

Real median household income in the United States rose by 1.1 percent between 2004 and 2005, reaching \$46,326, according to a report released today by the U.S. Census Bureau. Meanwhile, the nation's official poverty rate remained statistically unchanged at 12.6 percent. The percentage of people without health insurance coverage rose from 15.6 percent to 15.9 percent (46.6 million people).

2006 NATIONAL SURVEY OF LATINOS: THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE

Pew Research Center, July 13, 2006

<http://pewresearch.org/reports/?ReportID=35>

Latinos are feeling more discriminated against, politically energized and unified following the immigration policy debate and the pro-immigration marches this spring, according to the 2006 National Survey of Latinos conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center. More than half (54%) of Latinos surveyed say they see an increase in discrimination as a result of the policy debate, and three-quarters (75%) say the debate will prompt many more Latinos to vote in November. Almost two-thirds (63%) think the pro-immigrant marches this year signal the beginning of a new and lasting social movement. And a majority (58%) now believes Hispanics are working together to achieve common goals -- a marked increase from 2002, when 43% expressed confidence in Latino unity.

WHAT THE PUBLIC REALLY WANTS ON IMMIGRATION

The Century Foundation, June 30, 2006

<http://www.tcf.org/list.asp?type=PB&pubid=568>

Americans clearly believe that immigration is a serious problem and their concerns appear to be growing. In a March 2006 *Time* magazine poll, for example, 68 percent said illegal immigration was a very or an extremely serious problem. Similarly, a March Pew Foundation poll on immigration found that 74 percent termed immigration a very big or moderately big problem, up from 69 percent in 2002.

All previous web alerts can be found at:

<http://www.amb-usa.fr/irc/politics/webalert/default.htm>